

ARTHUR MASON ARNOLD.

[From the Chicago Daily Tribune, Monday, April 28, 1873.]

The sad news reached the family of the Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, at their residence, No. 104 Pine street, in the North Division, at a late hour on Saturday evening, that their only son, Arthur Mason Arnold, a lad of fifteen, of unusual promise, was drowned in Rock River on Saturday afternoon, April 27. The brief and heart-rending intelligence was confirmed, and made even more affecting in its nature, by the full and distressing particulars of the event brought to this city yesterday morning, by a gentleman from Dixon, a friend of the family, a special messenger, with tidings more melancholy in their purport than are usual in the visitations of human households.

Mr. Arnold and his family have, for some months, been preparing for an extended tour in Europe, and their arrangements were made and berths secured in the ill-fated Atlantic, of the White Star Line. The appalling disaster to that steamer deferred Mr. Arnold's departure, which, however, was soon to take place. The residence had been rented to E. H. Sheldon, Esq., and the final matters were being disposed of for immediate departure.

Mr. Arnold owns a farm on the Rock River, near Dixon, which he has made the home of a relative. It has been a familiar sight in our streets, Mr. Arnold and his beautiful boy, mounted on a gray steed and a gray pony, and many have turned on our thoroughfares to mark the pair as they were taking their rides together. The horses were to be sent to the Dixon farm to be kept during the tour in Europe, and Mr. Arnold and his son went out on Friday to see the pets disposed of, and bid farewell to friends. For some weeks past Arthur, whose inventive and mechanical turn of mind his fond parent had encouraged, had been building a small boat with his own hands in the yard at his home in this city, and was very proud of his achievement. The craft was a sail-boat, and was fitted up throughout by the boy, with such advice and study as he could bring to bear in the task. The little craft was finished, and the kind parent consented that it should be put on board the cars, to be left for safe-keeping at Dixon. In the mysterious dispensation of Providence it was an instrument of fate that has plunged the family and a wide circle of friends in grief.

Through our informant from Dixon, (above referred to,) we learn some particulars of the sad casualty. Arthur, boy-like, was eager to try his sail-boat. Mr. Arnold consented, but for safety took a large, clumsy, flat-bottomed skiff, and attempted to keep with his son. A flaw of wind carried Arthur's craft suddenly to a considerable distance, and then overturned it. The Rock River was running a full spring current, icy cold. The lad bravely clung to his capsized skiff, and seemed to hold it strongly. Agonized by his peril, the father made every exertion with his clumsy boat to reach his son, but the wind being against him, and his son not far from the bank, Mr. Arnold jumped ashore, ran along the bank, seized a heavy plank, and floated it out towards Arthur, who sank, chilled, before reaching it. The boy was recovered after several hours search, but beyond resuscitation. It would be an idle and ungracious task to seek to add a line to paint the anguish of the blow, sad to all, but saddest to the most loving of fathers, whose son thus perished before his eyes.

A few family friends went out to Dixon last evening to meet Mr. Arnold, and pay the mournful tribute of condolence in his great affliction. This party return to-day with the remains of the bright and noble boy, who, a few hours since, so full of hope and life, went out to place his pet pony and boat in good keeping while he was abroad. The funeral will occur on Wednesday.

The event has caused a profound sensation among the numerous friends of the family in this city. It is mysterious that a life so bright in its promise should have closed thus sadly. And yet may we not add that it is within human experience that, among those who mourn with Mr. Arnold and his house, there will be some who, in after years, will envy this stricken family the cherished memory and green billow of turf that are all that will remain of Arthur, as compared with the blighted life of some worse defeat of boyish promise in their own households. It is a gift from Heaven to have loved and lost such a son.

THE DEATH OF ARTHUR M. ARNOLD.

[From the Chicago Daily Tribune, Tuesday, April 29, 1873.]

The many friends of the Hon. I. N. Arnold will have a melancholy interest in the details of the calamity announced in yesterday's *Tribune*, which has deprived him of an only son, and thrown a dark shadow over his newly-established home and the plans of his foreign tour.

Mr. Arnold and his son arrived at Dixon on Friday evening, and spent the night at the hotel. In the morning Arthur launched his boat, and he and his father went in it down the river to the farm, about three miles. After dinner the boy was desirous to try his boat again, having meanwhile fitted the mast and sail, and the father, anxious for his safety, accompanied him in another boat—a scow—with but one perfect oar. The breeze had freshened, and Arthur was in high glee, tacking back and forth many times across Rock River, which bounds Mr. Arnold's farm for over a mile, and is here nearly 600 feet wide, and at this time swollen with the spring flood. The boy was much pleased with the sailing qualities of the boat, the work of his own hands throughout, and, as he was passing his father, swung his hat around his head and shouted, "Catch me if you can! isn't this jolly?" After indulging in this sport for some time, his father suggested that perhaps they had better go ashore; to which Arthur replied, "I will take one more turn first."



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This time he took a longer reach, and Mr. Arnold, who, for a moment, was attending to his own boat, on looking down the river saw that his son's boat had capsized nearly a quarter of a mile distant, and that he was clinging to the bottom. He at once attempted to reach him with the scow, but the wind was blowing strongly up the river, and, after using his utmost efforts for perhaps ten minutes, he found that he was making no headway, and he therefore turned to the shore, reaching which he ran along the bank, throwing off his coat as he went.

Meanwhile he attempted to hail Arthur, but the distance and head wind probably prevented the latter from hearing his voice. Arthur, however, called, asking his father to come, but in a quiet, firm tone, indicating entire self-possession. Arthur was fifteen, large for his age, strong, and an excellent swimmer. He had often told his father what he would do under precisely such circumstances, and while the latter was running down the bank, he saw the boy pull off his coat and strike for the shore. He swam rapidly, and had made about two-thirds of the distance when his father arrived opposite to him, and, seizing a plank, plunged into the water. The strong wind against the current caused quite a heavy swell, and the father could only see his son as he rose on the crests of the waves. When he last saw Arthur, the lad seemed not to be using his arms, but to be standing erect in the water. Mr. Arnold swam rapidly toward the point where his son was last seen, but Arthur had disappeared.

Just here the river deepens, with a rocky ledge, descending abruptly, causing a strong under-tow, which, with the current, taxed all Mr. Arnold's strength. The water was turbid, so that it was impossible to see beneath the surface. Mr. Arnold, with an agony that can not be pictured, searched for his son, but could not find him. Probably after the lad sank, he did not rise again to the surface. The father instantly gave the alarm and dispatched a man on horseback to the village, two miles distant, and in an incredibly short time very many citizens were on the ground, active in exploring the angry and turbid waters, while physicians made ready all the appliances for the resuscitation, should the opportunity offer, but all in vain. It was not until 7 o'clock that the body was found, some distance from where Arthur was last seen, in a crevice in the rocks, in almost 8 feet of water, the arms drawn up as if he had been seized with cramp.

When last seen by his father, the boy was only a few rods from him, but, being disabled by the excessive cold, the under-tow undoubtedly drew the unfortunate lad under and whirled him rapidly down the river.

The frantic grief of the father can only be imagined. The remains arrived in this city Monday afternoon, and were borne to his father's house by some of his young companions and schoolmates.

MEMORIAL.

ARTHUR MASON ARNOLD was born in Chicago, May 13th, 1858, and at the time of his death was approaching his fifteenth birthday. Always robust and active, he early developed a taste for athletic exercises, and with his physical development his vigorous mental powers kept pace. He loved manly sports, and, under skillful training, carried remarkable thoughtfulness and readiness into all the pursuits that, in later years, become the accomplishments of manliness. He was an admirable rider, an adept almost beyond his years in field-sports. It deserves to be recalled with melancholy interest, that on their way down the river, on the fatal trip, he playfully described to his father his experiences in the Summer of 1872, when, on a gunning excursion, he swam across the same stream four times successively, carrying dry, in one hand above his head, his gun, sportsman's apparatus and apparel. At another season this disaster, so fatal in termination, would have been deemed a slight misadventure, to be dismissed with a laugh. With all his boyish activity, there were abundant and notable indications of the more sterling traits that forecast usefulness. He was well advanced in preparation for college, with an aptitude for mechanics that foreshadowed a practical turn in his future professional acquirements. He built his boat patiently after drawings of his own, and named her the "Water Witch," from his recent reading of Cooper's novels. Mental and physical activity were evenly balanced. His moral nature responded to careful culture of excellent native traits. It is his father's remark to the writer that "There is not one painful recollection associated with his whole life, but the last. Dutiful, truthful, faithful, guileless, modest, manly, firm, there is not, until its closing hour, one unpleasant or painful incident connected with his memory." Is it not a life's reward to have earned such testimony, though the record closes at fifteen? As they were floating down the river to the treacherous eddy where destiny waited for him, the son pleasantly said, "An epic poem must be written describing the cruise of the 'Water Witch.' Father, our next sail together must be on Lake Geneva, Switzerland." A few minutes later he crossed alone the dark river of Death.

The funeral was attended on Wednesday, April 30th, at 10 o'clock, in St. James' Church, Chicago, Rev. Arthur Brooks, the rector of that parish, officiating. The school-companions of Arthur were present in a body, and the large concourse of friends attested wide-spread grief and sympathy. The remains will rest in the family lot at Graceland Cemetery. Few human lives, even the longest, win better rewards than the treasures of lasting affection and honored memory. A career ended in boyhood is not in vain, when it bears so full a record as that which embalms the name of ARTHUR MASON ARNOLD.

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